



National Alliance on Mental Illness

**nami**

**South Dakota**

# MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT

— resource for students



# what is mental health?

 [facebook.com/namisodak](https://facebook.com/namisodak)

 [@nami.southdakota](https://www.instagram.com/nami.southdakota)

 [NAMI South Dakota](https://www.youtube.com/NAMISouthDakota)

 [namisouthdakota.org](https://namisouthdakota.org)

Follow us on all our social media channels  
for resources!

We all experience mental health.

Given that all humans have a brain, everyone has  
mental health – similar to physical health.

Just like physical health – people get check-ups,  
go to wellness exams, and maintain physical  
health through a variety of activities. Same goes  
for mental health. Mental health can be  
maintained with good habits.



# what are mental health conditions?

Mental health conditions are medical illnesses. It is not anyone's fault, and most importantly, mental health conditions are **common** and **treatable**.

**1** in **5**

**students** will experience a mental health condition in a given year.



## fiction vs fact

People living with a mental illness are often violent.

Mental illness is a sign of weakness.

People with mental illness will never get better.

Actually, the vast majority of people living with a mental health condition are no more violent than anyone else. People living with mental illness are more likely to be victims of crime.

Mental illness is not caused by a personal weakness - nor can it be cured by positive thinking or willpower - proper treatment is needed.

For some people a mental health challenge may be a lifelong condition, like diabetes. But as with diabetes, proper treatment enables people living with a mental illness to live fulfilling and productive lives.

**Resource: Bring Change to Mind**

# Know the warning signs



1. Feeling sad or withdrawn for more than 2 weeks
2. Trying to harm or end one's life or making plans to do so
3. Severe, out-of-control, risk-taking behavior that causes harm to self or others
4. Seeing, hearing or believing things that are not real
5. Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
6. Excessive use of alcohol or drugs
7. Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or difficulty breathing
8. Throwing up, using laxatives or not eating to lose weight; significant weight loss
9. Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
10. Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still leading to physical danger or failing at school

source: nami.org

# Are you worried about yourself or someone you care about?



If you notice any of these warning signs, it's ok to have questions and most importantly to ask questions.



Try and understand what they are experiencing and how their daily life is impacted



Making this connection is often the first step to getting treatment



# How to help a friend...



## Share your concerns.

If you notice any of the above warning signs or if you're concerned one of your friends is thinking about suicide, don't be afraid to talk to them about it.



## Start a conversation

- Have the resources available during the conversation
- Share the signs you have observed
- Let your friend know how much you care

If you think your friend may be thinking about suicide, ask the direct question, saying something like:

- "Are you thinking about suicide?"
- "Do you have a plan? Do you know how you would do it?"
- "When was the last time you thought about suicide?"

If your friend answers "Yes" to these questions or if you think they might be at risk of suicide, you **NEED** to talk to an adult you trust **IMMEDIATELY**, or call the National Suicide Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or 911.

Listen,  
express  
concern  
&  
reassure



**Focus on being understanding, caring and nonjudgmental, saying something like:**

- ♥ "You are not alone. I'm here for you"
- ♥ "I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help"
- ♥ "We are friends; You are important to me."

### ***What not to do:***

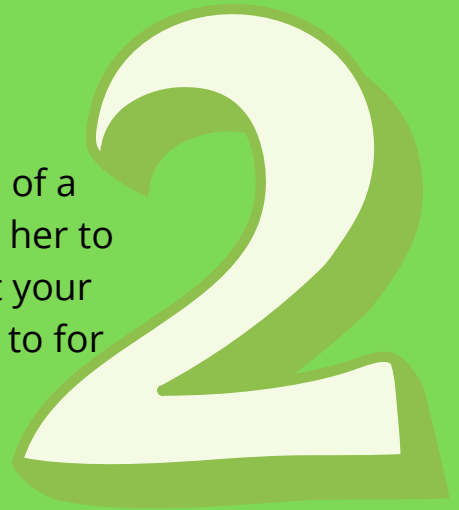
- ⊘ Don't promise secrecy.
- ⊘ Don't ask in a way that indicates you want "no" for an answer
  - "You're not thinking about suicide, are you?"

### ***What not to say:***

- ⊘ We all go through hard times like these. You'll be fine.
- ⊘ It's all in your head. Just snap out of it.

## Get Help





If your friend is experiencing warning signs of a mental health condition, encourage him or her to TALK TO A TRUSTED ADULT. In addition, let your friend know about resources they can turn to for anonymous support and information.



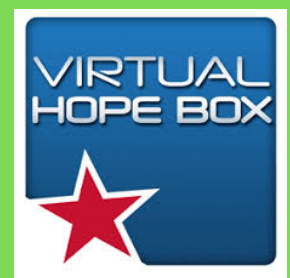
## Online Resources:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  <a href="http://jasonfoundation.com">jasonfoundation.com</a>          |  <a href="http://bringchange2mind.org">bringchange2mind.org</a>   |
|  <a href="http://namisouthdakota.org">namisouthdakota.org</a>          |  <a href="http://my3app.org">my3app.org</a>                       |
|  <a href="http://helplinecenter.org">helplinecenter.org</a>            |  <a href="http://yourlifeyourvoice.org">yourlifeyourvoice.org</a> |
|  <a href="http://sdsuicideprevention.org">sdsuicideprevention.org</a> |  <a href="http://thetrevorproject.org">thetrevorproject.org</a>  |

## Talk to Someone:

-  Crisis Text Line: Text "NAMI" to 741741
-  Your live Your Voice Text Line: Text "VOICE" to 20121
-  Helpline Crisis Text Line: Text "icare" to 898211
-  National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

## Apps:



# 3

## Be a good friend

One of the most important factors in recovery is the understanding and acceptance of friends. Below is a list of ways you can help a friend who is experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition:



- Include your friend in your plans – continue inviting him or her, even if they turn down your invitation
- Help your friend stay positive
- Don't treat him or her differently
- Stand up for your friend
- Check-in regularly, listen and offer support
- Educate yourself

## Positive Coping Strategies:

Exercise

Write in a journal 

Draw

Listen to music

Take a bath

Play with a pet

Spend time in nature

Read a book

Meditate

Cook a meal

Pray

Practice breathing exercises 

List the things you feel grateful for

Go for a walk

Use a relaxation app

Do yoga

Reframe the way you are thinking about the problem

Use progressive muscle relaxation

Picture your "happy place"

Give yourself a pep talk

Drink tea

Squeeze a stress ball

Put on lotion that smells good

Look at landscape photos that help you feel relaxed

Think of something funny

Look at pictures that remind you of the people, places, and things that bring you joy



## Reduce Stigma

Stigma is the biggest reason people don't try to get help. By taking steps to reduce mental health stigma in your school and community, you can help your friend feel more comfortable speaking up when they need support. The sooner your friend gets help, the greater their chances of getting better will be.

Below is a list of things you can do to help reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness and end the silence:

- Talk about mental health with friends & family
- Share links to resources on social media
- Don't bully, stereotype or label others
- Call people out if they use stigmatizing language
- Use people first language



**Kristen Bell**

**Emma Stone**

**AJ Mendez**

**Michael Phelps**

**Brittany Snow**

**Mark Ruffalo**